



***United States Attorney
District of New Jersey***

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**KEY PLAYER IN CONSPIRACY TO STEAL OVER \$2 MILLION
IN TAX REFUND CHECKS SENTENCED TO 30 MONTHS IN PRISON**

TRENTON, N.J. – A Newark, N.J., man was sentenced today to 30 months in prison for his role in a conspiracy to file false tax returns that generated over \$2 million in fraudulent income tax refund checks, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Felipo Edmundo Vidal Geraldino, 50, previously pleaded guilty to an Information charging him with conspiracy to defraud the United States by obtaining the payment of false claims. He entered his guilty plea before Chief U.S. District Judge Garrett E. Brown Jr., who also imposed today's sentence in Trenton federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

From January to July 2009, Geraldino and his co-conspirators filed several hundred false and fraudulent tax returns with the IRS in the names of more than 300 different individuals across eleven states, including New Jersey, New York, Florida, and Alaska – which yielded more than \$2 million in federal income tax refund checks.

Geraldino operated La Bella Campesina – a small grocery store in Newark – prior to his arrest, and deposited the fraudulently-obtained refund checks into his business checking account. From there, he wrote checks to dozens of co-conspirators who cashed the checks for him, took their respective cuts, and provided Geraldino and the conspiracy's organizers with the majority of the illicit proceeds.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Brown ordered Geraldino to serve three years of supervised release, pay restitution in the amount of \$220,000, and cooperate with immigration authorities. Geraldino is a citizen of the Dominican Republic.

U.S. Attorney Fishman praised the joint investigative work of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, United States Postal Inspection Service, IRS – Criminal Investigation, and Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General. He added that the investigation is ongoing.

This government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee Vartan of the U.S. Attorney's Office Economic Crimes Unit in Newark.

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Defense counsel: Peter Carter, Esq., Assistant Federal Public Defender, Newark